E L - H A Q Q I S L A M I C C E N T E R
D A ' W A H C O M M I T T E E
P R E S E N T S



ARE YOU READY FOR ISLAM?

THE ONLY SOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a time unlike any other period in the history of mankind. We have mastered technology to a degree unimaginable just fifty years ago. Various technological achievements have gradually transformed the way human beings perform day to day routines as well as how we interact with one another. However, despite these accomplishments, we have never lived in a more tumultuous time than now. We have simultaneously become the most capable and the most confused generation in history. We are living in times of extreme uncertainty and in an age of extreme opposites. The wealth that certain societies have amassed today dwarfs any past civilizations' at their most prosperous. Yet at the same time the divide between those who possess such wealth and the poor of the world has never been wider. Even with the advances in medicine and agricultural science, epidemic disease and wide spread famine are approaching record numbers. Most of the technological advances we see have been transformed into the most awe inspiring destructive forces the world has ever known. If there was ever a time in the history of the Earth that man could bring about what certain people call 'Armageddon' or the 'apocalypse' , it is indeed now. The nuclear family has become a victim of these times. Drugs, drunkenness, lewdness, and an all-around atmosphere of self-destructiveness abound and our societies are suffering from the consequences of such behavior. People do not feel safe in their homes, whether it is the threat of an intruder who is desperate to get money for drugs or the fact that any minute their homes could be incinerated by falling missiles. The ideals of a 'liberal' society have opened the door to all things detrimental to human survival. Children are exposed to things that they never should see at such young ages. Yet in the 'liberal' society, the desires of the individual take precedence over what is most beneficial to the human family as a whole. People have become slaves to their lower passions because of what is fed to them by the society as 'liberation'. The result is decadence with no parallel in history. Never have there been more alcoholics, serial killers, rapists, and child molesters than now. This is considered to be a 'civilized' society. People are desperate for a solution. A solution that is neither a quick fix nor a band-aid but a solution that goes to the core of what plagues mankind and provides a lasting cure. That solution is Islam.

ISLAM: THE CURE

According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (U.S.A.), alcohol related vehicle crashes kills someone every 32 minutes and non-fatal injuries occur every two minutes. Fatalities involving alcohol accounted for 40% of all traffic deaths in 2000 and drugs other than alcohol were factors in an additional 18% of all deaths. Alcohol related accidents totaled a cost of over $51 billion dollars in 2000 alone. The negative effect of alcohol and drugs in our 'civilized' society cannot be denied. Everyone in our so-called advanced societies has in some way been affected by the evils of these vices. The National Crime Victimization Survey (U.S.A) reports that 28% of the victims of violence reported that their attacker was under the influence of alcohol alone or in combination with other drugs. Alcohol related acts of workplace violence accounted for 35% of all incidents and 25% of jail inmates said that they were under the influence while arguing with family, friends, spouse, etc. Think of the countless incidents of senseless violence that could have been avoided had neither alcohol nor drugs been involved. Islam is the only world religion that addresses the evils of alcohol and drugs in its texts and removes any ambiguity as to the position of Islam on the issue.

O you who believe! Intoxicants, gambling, *Al-Ansaab*, and *Al-Azlaam* (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of *Shaitaan*'s (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful. (The Noble Qur'an, 5:90)

***Shaitaan* (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from *As-Salaat* (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain? (5:91)**

What is evident is that not only does the Qur'an address the purpose of alcohol and drugs as a means of causing hatred between people and as a distraction from worship but also in the same verses condemn the destructive vice of gambling as well. Name one other system that has inspired almost 23% of the Earth's population to completely turn away from alcohol, drugs, and gambling. Of course in every religion there will be those who do not adhere to some principles of their doctrines but the percentage of alcohol/drug related crimes, deaths, etc. in even the most unrestricted Islamic societies are insignificant when compared elsewhere.

The economy of our world is changing so fast, one can not keep pace with the fluctuations of whether we are in periods of growth or constriction. At present the world economy is reeling and individuals, institutions, and even entire nations are being crippled by the weight of debt. Debt is a true measure of wealth. If the masses of the people are kept in insurmountable levels of debt, they are not a threat to those who control where wealth actually ends up. The economic systems employed by 'modern' societies are designed to keep a large portion of the population in some form of debt by allowing them to use things that they cannot really afford, enriching the corporations who provide these products and stifling the growth and creativity of the purchaser with an ever present amount owed. This is made possible by the use of charging 'interest' on loans. This system is further criminalized when one considers the fact that the lower the income of an individual or institution, the higher the rate of interest one has to pay. This system has been used by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to wreak havoc in the so-called developing nations by loaning large sums of money to nations that can not possibly pay it back, forcing these nations to relinquish control of its own natural and human resources. Allah, in the Qur'an, speaks directly to the evils of this institution and provides mankind with the solution.

Those who eat *Ribaa* (interest) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by *Shaitaan* (Satan) leading him to insanity. That is because they say: "Trading is only like *Ribaa* (interest)," whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden *Ribaa* (interest). So whosoever receives an admonition from his Lord and stops eating *Ribaa* (interest) shall not be punished for the past; his case is for Allah (to judge); but whoever returns [to *Ribaa* (interest)], such are the dwellers of the Fire - they will abide therein. (2:275)

O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from *Ribaa* (interest) (from now onward), if you are (really) believers. (2:278)

Acts of kindness with regards to the debtor is a command from Allah and the manners of how to justly deal with one who is in debt is given by Allah.

And if the debtor is in a hard time (has no money), then grant him time till it is easy for him to repay, but if you remit it by way of charity, that is better for you if you did but know. (2:280)

The only result of an economic system that relies on the debt of others is wealth for some and poverty for most. People are literally starving not only in countries like Malawi, Rwanda, and Ethiopia but also in what are supposed to be well to do countries. Travel to any major city in the United States and you will find a large segment of the population literally sleeping in boxes and dumpsters not far from some of the wealthiest people in the world. How did this disparity come to be? Is the success of a society determined by its selfishness? Islam forbids the hoarding of wealth and demands that those who have wealth give to those who are poor in order to purify it. This commandment is given many times in the Qur'an.

(Charity is) for *Fuqaraa* (the poor), who in Allah's Cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about in the land (for trade or work). The one who knows them not, thinks that they are rich because of their modesty. You may know them by their mark, they do not beg of people at all. And whatever you spend in good, surely Allah knows it well. (2:273)

Truly those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and perform *As-Salaat* (*Iqaamat-as-Salaat*), and give *Zakaat (charity)*, they will have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (2:77)

The Zakaat system in Islam is a fundamental principle of worship. It is required of every Muslim who is able to give the Zakaat. The Zakaat is for the poor only and not to pay someone's salary or for other extra curricular activities as seen in most religions' idea of charity. It is the only system in which the wealth of a society is spread out among the people to ensure that the divide between the wealthy and poor is not so vast. Allah also gives the commandment to be gentle and understanding with those to whom you have given loans. Under the current system of laws and regulations, the poor who cannot pay are punished further with interest rate increases, late fees, etc. Islam is a mercy to man as it has come to eradicate these forms of oppression.

Today, 42 million people are said to be living with AIDS and in 2002 alone, more than 5 million people contracted the virus. Over 1 million people in Angola are infected with AIDS. As a barometer of the current morals in our technologically advanced yet morally backward society, consider that in 1970 there were only two known sexually transmitted diseases. Today, there are 25 known major STDs. Approximately 15 million people contract an STD every year and there are over 65 million people just in the U.S. alone who are currently living with an incurable STD (California Policy Research Center, Univ. of California). Islam is the only system of living that has within it, regulations that hinder the prevalence of the type of behavior that cause these vile conditions. Islam demands that the chastity of the man and the woman in society be guarded meticulously. There are several layers of this profound system that, if implemented, prevents the situations that our current societies find themselves in.

Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.). That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do. (24:30).

And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent and to draw their veils all over *Juyubihinna* (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms, etc.) and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islam), or the (female) slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who lack vigor, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex. And let them not

stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful. (24:31)

As human beings, it is very important to remember that one of the things that distinguish us from the animals is the fact that we wear clothing. It is an honorable thing to cover the body for it, in truth, determines how civilized a society is. Throughout history, humans who did not cover or barely covered at all were considered backwards, barbaric, and uncultured. Now we live in a time where it is encouraged to uncover and those who do cover themselves are labeled 'backward'. Men and especially women are being convinced that to expose themselves is freedom. Today, people have no shame in displaying to strangers that which should be honored and protected. Most people would not go around displaying their bank account numbers nor would they just leave their most precious jewels and heirlooms laying around for everyone to see. So why when it comes to ourselves, our wives, and daughters, do we allow any and everyone to see any and everything? Thus unleashing the beast in man who, when confronted with more exposure than he is emotionally equipped to handle, begins to engage in the type of illicit behavior that brings the rape, death, and disease we now find around us. Allah says,

O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft- Forgiving, Most Merciful. (33:59)

O Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover yourselves (screen your private parts, etc.) and as an adornment, and the raiment of righteousness, that is better. Such are among the *Ayaat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allah, that they may remember (i.e. leave falsehood and follow truth. (7:26)

O Children of Adam! Let not *Shaitaan* (Satan) deceive you, as he got your parents [Adam and Hawwa (Eve)] out of Paradise, stripping them of their raiments, to show them their private parts. Verily, he and *Qabîluhu* (his soldiers from the jinns or his tribe) see you from where you cannot see them. Verily, We made the *Shayaatin* (devils) *Auliyaa'* (protectors and helpers) for those who believe not. (7:27)

In any society where sexual promiscuity increasingly becomes the norm, the fabric of the society, the family, is gradually destroyed. In the U.S., 28% of all children live in single parent households and of them, 84% live with the mother. 79% of all pregnancies of women under 20 are unmarried teens. Condoms and birth control are band-aid solutions that hardly work because to solve the problem is to delve into the root of the problem. The root of the problem is that morality has been defined by trends and trends come and go. We need a system of morality higher than what man can produce. Humans have an internal instinct that recognizes that there is One authority in our lives and that obedience to him is the key to success.

And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed (or from Adam's loin his offspring) and made them testify as to themselves (saying): "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes! We testify," lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: "Verily, we have been unaware of this."(7:172)

Racism and tribalism have been the cause of many conflicts throughout the history of man. People who judge based on skin color or who hate because of race or tribe are some of the worst enemies to

mankind. Islam has come to free us from the dangers of racism. Allah tells us in the Qur'an that it is righteousness that distinguishes one from another and not the appearance or tribe.

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)" (Noble Qur'an 49:13)

And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors: verily in that are Signs for those who know (Noble Qur'an 30:22)

Islam is a program for life. Islam is designed by Allah for us to practice in order to purge the evils from ourselves. When the Muslims are commanded to gather for prayer, race cannot be a factor. The lines of prayer are not determined by race. The Hajj (pilgrimage) of the Muslims to Makkah forces the king to dress like the peasant. It forces the white man to go through the same trials of Hajj as a black man. These forms of worship along with the Zakaat and others, if properly implemented, can bring about true change in the self and throughout the entire society. Islam, however, is a religion of belief and action. To be a good Muslim, one has to be prepared to *work*. Islam requires *discipline* and *self-restraint*. Islam is a lifestyle of praying and begging to Allah in the middle of the night when others are sleep. Islam requires one to fast to develop the strength to endure the calls of hunger and the lower desires and to be able to resist unlawful temptations. Islam is a lifestyle of acquiring *knowledge*. There are so many aspects of Islam that one can spend his or her entire life learning different things in Islam. Allah says in Qur'an," **It is only (those who have knowledge) among His slaves that fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All Mighty, Oft-Forgiving"(35:28).** The Muslim has to have a thirst for knowledge of this religion because in the knowledge of Islam comes the proper understanding and implementation. Islam requires courage in the face of opposition and ridicule. Since the beginning of the establishment of Islam, Muslims have been under attack. Sometimes it is an ideological attack and sometimes it is an all out physical assault. The Muslim, however, has to have the faith and the courage to continue to believe and to practice no matter what others in society may do, say, or think. If it is 'unpopular' to be a Muslim, then it is even more important that we continue to be seen and heard practicing our faith. We should remember what Allah says in the Qur'an…

(They are) those who are patient ones, those who are true (in Faith, words, and deeds), and obedient with sincere devotion in worship to Allah. Those who spend [give the *Zakaat* and alms in the Way of Allah] and those who pray and beg Allah's Pardon in the last hours of the night (3:17).

So do not become weak (against your enemy), nor be sad, and you will be superior (in victory) if you are indeed (true) believers (3:139).

They intend to put out the Light of Allah (i.e. the religion of Islam, this Qur'an, and Prophet Muhammad SAW) with their mouths. But Allah will complete His Light even though the disbelievers hate it (61:8).

Our world today is plagued with so many ills that one may be tempted to lose hope and give in to despair. What I have given is a brief summary of some of the benefits of Islam and how Islam brings about true change in this society starting with the individual and moving beyond to the world. There are many additional topics that I did not cover wherein Islam has the cure in place, ready at our fingertips and I encourage you to investigate further. If you have been searching for answers to the

above mentioned problems as well as others, I encourage you to take a serious look at Islam. Remember, Islam requires *action*, *discipline*, *knowledge*, *courage*, *strength* and *patience*… Dear reader, are you *hard-working* enough? Are you *disciplined* enough? Are you *smart* enough? Are you *courageous* enough? Are you *patient* enough? Are you *strong* enough? In other words, …**ARE YOU READY FOR ISLAM?**

SOURCES

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